

RSPA-1998-4309-11

MOD  
12124-M

DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION  
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Wednesday, March 3, 1999

Mr. R. Ryan Posten  
Chief, Exemptions Branch  
Research & Special Programs Admn.  
Department of Transportation  
400 7th Street  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Posten:

When recently reviewing the requirements of DOT Exemption 12124 in connection with a joint compliance audit evaluation with the Albemarle Corporation, the holder of the exemption, a few minor variances were noted in the final production drawing and the information available on the finished tanks. Albemarle has requested that we bring these to DOT's attention on their behalf, to assure that no confusion exists and to furnish DOT with the latest actual information on the finished tanks. We believe that you will find all these changes to be of a minor or of an editorial nature.

The tank manufacturer has issued a final drawing which has now been renamed D-ALB.PROD.CON, Rev. 0, dated October 20, 1998 (which replaces the drawing referenced in the exemption identified in paragraph 7.a. Hebel Corporation Drawing D-1099-10 Rev. 2 dated March 3, 1998). I have enclosed a copy of this final drawing and checked the areas that have been changed for ready identification by DOT staff. Changes are few in number and minor, and clearly no changes reducing the strength of the tank have been made. For the specific changes, see my marks on the drawing (1) near the Vessel Design Criteria Table to the top right, (2) the vessel height dimensions near the middle of the drawing and to the left, and (3) the Detail 3 Outlet piping information above the overall vessel outline. This latter outlet information was part of the supplemental information furnished to you December 28, 1998, by Jack Helms of Albemarle in connection with the final issuance of the exemption. This outlet detail information has now been incorporated into the base drawing so that tank details can be found all in one place.

When the application was originally submitted on July 28, 1998, it was patterned after an existing exemption E-1 1970, issued to Exxon Chemical, Inc. This was done by Albemarle on our advice since there was some press of time in obtaining the exemption and we advised then that the quickest method for DOT review was to use applicable detail from an already-approved design, namely DOT-E 11970. While this technically is a feasible approach, it did

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reveal one problem which is not a safety issue, i.e., DOT prescribes minimum thickness for vessel design thereby implying that thicker materials are permissible. However, with a specified tare weight quantitative restriction as in this exemption and in Exxon's, this in fact prevents one from building a stronger tank. Such a restriction does not appear to be in the best interests of safety. Under the circumstances, *if DOT would* interpret the tare weight limitation as preventing use of thicker shell material, we request that *the* tare *weight* reference be removed or, at least, the number be changed to 1202 lbs (546 kilos) which is the total of the weight of the materials used in construction of the current tanks. Likewise, the volume is shown as 212 gallons while the actual volumetric measurement of the vessel has resulted in a volume of 232 gallons.

Accordingly, we respectfully request that the drawing reference change in paragraph 7.a. be as noted above, that the third bullet in this same paragraph be changed to 879 liters (232 gallons), and that the bullet for tare weight be removed or changed to 546 kilos (1202 lbs).

Thank you for your assistance in these matters.

Sincerely,



Gordon Rousseau

Enclosure

## AVAILABILITY OF NON-SCANNABLE ITEMS

RSPA-1998-4309  
Docket / Document Number

DOT-E 12124-M  
Old Docket Number, If any

Drawings to HMT Associates, LLC  
application for modification dated  
3/3/99.

Name / Description of Item(s) non-scannable

MAY BE VIEWED IN RSPA's Records Center

(Contact: Barbara Alston)  
Agency / Office Name / Room Number / Contact Person (if any)

during the hours of 9AM - 4:30 pm.